

The Impact of Sexual Abuse on Children: CSAAS and Other Issues

Anthony Urquiza, Ph.D.
CAARE Center
UC Davis Medical Center

10:15am-11:45am
Saturday November 19, 2017
2016 CASA State Conference
Virginia Department of Criminal Justice
Services

Overview and Objectives

- Acquire understanding of the impact of CSA on developing concepts, relationship skills, characteristics necessary for a healthy development.
- Understand the context and process of CSA and the research literature children's responses to abuse.
- Overview of related CSA issues (e.g., false allegations, patterns in disclosure)
- Discussion and questions

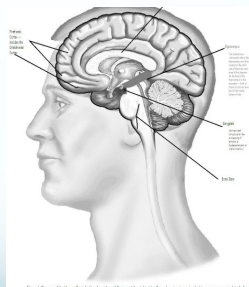
A Contextual Approach to Child Maltreatment

This is what child development
is all about...

*The power of 1000 little things
over 1 or 2 big things*

"The strength of the relationship is
a function of the consistency
and continuity of the
interaction"

"Patterns of interaction over time"



So what does this have to do with child maltreatment?

Child Sexual Abuse

Example: A girl is repeatedly fondled and forced to engage in oral copulation from 3 – 8 years. The perpetrator, her stepfather, tells her that this is their 'special secret' and if she tells anyone – then her parents will divorce and she will have to go live in foster care.

'Pattern of interactions over time'

What happens with a young child who is raised in an eroticized environment:

What they 'learned' ...

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

What they didn't 'learn' ...

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

What happens with a young child who is raised in an eroticized environment:

What they 'learned' ...

- Sexual gratification (increased masturbation)
- Distorted body image (self view through sexualized body parts)
- Sexualized relationships (sexually inappropriate behaviors)
- Distrust of close interpersonal relationships (people have sexualized intent)

What they didn't 'learn' ...

- Normal sexual development
- Age-appropriate peer relationships
- Self-perception based on achievements and abilities
- Trust in close interpersonal relationships

BTW: It's not just the behaviors – its also the cognitions!

The Context of Child Sexual Abuse

Any questions?

Time to change gears...



Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome

The Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome (CSAAS) is composed of five categories, of which two define basic childhood vulnerability and three are sequentially contingent on the sexual assault:

- (1) Secrecy
- (2) Helplessness
-
- (3) Entrapment and Accommodation,
- (4) Delayed, Unconvincing Disclosure
- (5) Retraction

Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome

“The accommodation syndrome is proposed as a simple and logical model for use by clinicians to improve understanding and acceptance of the child’s position in the complex and controversial dynamics of sexual victimization.”

Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome

Why use CSAAS in court?

There are many entrenched myths, prejudices, and distorted opinions regarding sexually abused children's actions, behaviors, and responses to their victimization.

The jury may not appreciate/understand the child's response to their victimization.

'Preparing to rehabilitate a child witness'

Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome

Common Examples

- Child has a significant delay in disclosing abuse
- Child has opportunity to disclose abuse and does not
- Child is asked about being abused and denies
- Description of abusive experiences is inconsistent
- Child appears to voluntarily return to situation where abuse occurs
- Perpetrator and victim appear to have positive relationship
- After disclosure, child states abuse never occurred

A Side Note about the Context of CSA...

How would a person go about engaging a child in a sexual relationship?

[Read Conte, Wolfe, & Smith on the concept of 'grooming']

A Side Note about the Context of CSA...

How would a person go about engaging a child in a sexual relationship?

- Gain access
- Establish a relationship
- Gain trust
- Introduce sexuality
- Increase the amount of sexuality
- Overtures of a 'special relationship,' threats/promises not to tell, other people wouldn't understand, you would get in trouble, I would get in trouble, etc.

A Side Note about the Context of CSA...

How would a person go about engaging a child in a sexual relationship?

Three studies of perpetrator strategies...

Conte, Wolf, and Smith (1989). What sexual offenders tell us about prevention strategies. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 13, 293-301.

Elliott, M., Browne, K., & Kilcoyne, J. (1995). Child sexual abuse prevention: What offenders tell us. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 19-5, 679-694.

Leclerc, B., Proulx, J., Beaugerard, E. (2009). Examining the modus operandi of sexual offenders against children and its practical implications. *Aggression and Violence Behavior*, 14, 5-12.

A Side Note about the Context of CSA...

Was there something about their appearance that attracted you?

- Mostly vivaciousness, friendliness, proximity, close to me. No physical characteristics. I felt they would be victims willingly because they were being overly friendly with me.
- The look in their eyes. It's a look of trust. They like you. If they are going to show resistance, they'll look away.
- Has a look of being vulnerable in some way. May not be assertive; may not be outgoing. Trusts adults. You can see this in their body language, the way they look with their eyes. The way they hold themselves.



A Side Note about the Context of CSA...

If there was more than one child with this physical appearance, why did you select one over the other?

- I would choose the youngest one or the one whom I thought would not talk about it.
- I would probably pick the one who appeared more needy, the child hanging back from others or feeling picked on by brothers or sisters. The one who liked to sit in my lap. The one who likes attention and stroking.

A Side Note about the Context of CSA...

Was there something about the child's behavior that attracted you to the child?

- Friendly, showed me their panties.
- The way the child would look at me, trustingly. The child who was teasing me, smiling at me, asking me to do favors.
- Someone who had been a victim before; quiet, withdrawn, compliant. Someone who had not been a victim would be more non-accepting of the sexual language or stepping over the boundaries of modesty.
- Quieter, easier to manipulate, less likely to object or put up a fight, goes along with things.

A Side Note about the Context of CSA...

After you identified a potential victims, did you thing about getting caught?

- In general, no. I selected victims that I thought wouldn't report me.
- Yes, this would be a primary part of my strategy in picking the time and place and victim. That's why most of my victims were 7 and below. Some were even 3 years old, and I don't think they knew what was going on. I went after the victims that had a low potential for telling someone.
- Yes, but I excused myself by telling myself that I wasn't really molesting her. I was just being curious.
- Yes, it was a fear the entire time I was molesting her. Toward the end, it got to be a contest to see if I could get away with it.

A Side Note about the Context of CSA...

Additional questions in Conte, Wolf, & Smith (1989)...

- *After you had identified a potential victim, what did you do to engage the child into sexual contact?*
- *After you identified a potential victim, what did you say to engage the child into sexual contact?*
- *How did you gain control over the victim?*
- *Did you threaten the victim?*
- *Write a manual on how to sexually abuse a child.*

Context of Child Sexual Abuse

- Most child molesters are male
- Most child molesters have a pre-existing relationship with the victim (family member/father, step-father, other relative, babysitter, neighbor, etc)
- The perpetrator usually holds a position of power (i.e., size, authoritarian role) over the child
- Child molesters typically engage in a relationship with the child (i.e., grooming), then use this relationship to get the child to meet their sexual needs, and avoid getting caught

Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome

Okay, Done with the side note - back to CSAAS...

Secrecy

Helplessness

Entrapment and Accommodation

Delayed and Unconvincing Disclosure

Retraction

Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome

SECRECY

Myth: Children will tell about being abused

Coercive and manipulative strategies:

- Threats
- Bribes
- Special attention/treats/gifts
- Misinformation/distortion



Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome

"Don't tell your mother"

"I'll kill you"

"You'll get in big trouble"

"If you tell anyone, it will break up the family and you will end up in a foster home"

"I'll get in big trouble"

"This is our special secret - no one else would understand. If you told then we would not be able to spend special time together"

Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome

HELPLESSNESS

Myth: Children should be able to protect themselves from being abused

- Children younger, smaller, weaker
- Child cannot insure their own sexual safety
- Parental supervision may be impaired
- Perpetrator often holds an authoritarian role
- Parent/Caregiver ability to protect may be impaired
(e.g., substance abuse, mental health problems, neglect)
- Parent/Caregiver is perpetrator



Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome

ENTRAPMENT/ACCOMMODATION

Myth: Children will avoid their perpetrator

It is not uncommon for a sexually abused child, who cannot prevent their continued re-victimization (and they cannot disclose their abuse), to engage in faulty or maladaptive means of coping with their trauma.



Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome

One set of strategies involve attempting to use *external* means to avoid/cope with their victimization:

They may make futile attempts to deter their victimization.

- staying away from home (but you have to come home eventually)
- trying to lock bedroom/bathroom doors
- wearing two or three pairs of pajamas at night
- feigning sleep (during efforts to molest them)

It is important to understand that these efforts are typically unsuccessful in trying to insure the sexual safety of the child victim.

Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome

A second strategy used to cope with the victimization is to remove oneself *psychologically* from the victimization through the process of *dissociation*.

- Blanking out during the abuse
- Becoming numb and not feeling anything
- Staring out into space (e.g., staring through a window, looking at something on the wall)
- Feeling disconnected from what was happening to them

Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome

This pattern of dissociation/detachment may result in the victim not displaying outward distress when talking about the abuse.

It may be important for the child to maintain an outward positive demeanor

"She didn't look like she was abused to me"

When testifying, children may talk about abuse events without distress, leading jurors to incorrectly develop the notion that maybe they were not abused.

In a study of children's emotional responses during an evidentiary interview, ~75% of CSA children expressed 'neutral' emotion.

Sayfan, Mitchell, Goodman, Eisen, & Qin (2008)

Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome

DELAYED, UNCONVINCING DISCLOSURE

Myth: *Children will tell right away and disclose clearly about what happened to them.*

The myth: Children will immediately disclose their sexual victimization

There is usually a significant delay in disclosure from the initial onset of the abuse.

See Briere and Elliot (1994) - approximately 75% of children failed to disclose 12 months after the onset of their sexual victimization (this finding is supported by other research).

Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation
Syndrome

DELAYED, UNCONVINCING DISCLOSURE

Myth: Children will tell right away and disclose clearly about what happened to them.

It is difficult to do research on disclosure, but the research supports that one of the consistent findings is...

Closer the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim/the long it take the victim to disclose

Close proximity: Perpetrator has more control, victim more easily frightened.

Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation
Syndrome

DELAYED, UNCONVINCING DISCLOSURE

Even when children do report abuse (which is later confirmed), their accounts are frequently marked by inconsistencies and tentativeness

- ❖ Disclosure is a process, not an act
- ❖ Dissociation and disclosure

Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation
Syndrome

DELAYED, UNCONVINCING DISCLOSURE

Summit: *Gradual disclosure*, initial disclosure, following by additional information and disclosures

Recent: *Rapid disclosure*, victim tells about all or most of what happened the first time they disclosed

Data to support both types of disclosure.

Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome

RETRACTION

Myth: If the child victims retracts the allegation, they were lying in the first place.

Myth: All children lie about things, and they also lie about sexual abuse.

- The child has ambivalent feelings about the perpetrator
- The perpetrator has continued access to the child; the perpetrator continues to manipulate/coerce the child
- A proxy for the perpetrator has access to the child
- The child is fearful of testifying in court

Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome

RETRACTION

A Filial Dependency Model of Recantation

(Malloy, Lyon, & Quas, 2007)

N=257 substantiated cases from dependency court. 23.1% of cases involved recantation.

Best predictor of retraction was pressure imposed by a family member.

Also, abuse victims more vulnerable to familial adult influences:

- >younger children
- >abused by a parent
- >lacked caregiver support

- Malloy Lyon, & Quas (2007)

Why do people not know about CSA?

- Sources of Information: Most people acquire information about CSA through TV, newspaper, sensationalized accounts.
- Finkelhor (1984): Study supported notion that the general public have misperceptions of CSA.
- Gray (1993): Jurors involved in a CSA case where an expert testified were better informed than members of a jury pool.
- Clinical Intervention: Sound clinical practice involves the assessment of parental distortions and misperceptions regarding CSA.

And now for something completely different...



What else can we talk about?

False Allegations of Sexual Abuse
Children's Sexual Behavior

False Allegations of Child Sexual Abuse



False Allegations of CSA...

But wait...

Don't children lie about being sexually abused?

>Yes, children lie about being abused (i.e., false allegations happen)

Aren't there studies that show that about half of children who make allegations of CSA are lying?

>Yes, there are studies that report about half of allegations are false.

False Allegations of CSA...

These are the studies supporting frequent false allegations of CSA...

Benedek and Schetky (1984) 55.5% of allegations were deemed false

Green (1986) 36.4% of allegations were deemed false

False Allegations of CSA...

<u>Author/Date</u>	<u>Sample</u>	<u>Rate</u>
Peters (1979)	64	6%
Goodwin et al. (1979)	46	2%
Tufts' (1984)	181	8%
Jones & McGraw (1987)	576	1%
Faller (1996)	142	3%
Everson & Boat (1989)	24	5%
U.S. DHHS-ACYF (1999)	?	<1%
Oates et al. (2000)	551	2.5%
Trocme & Bala (2004)	798	4%
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Benedek & Schetky (1984)	18	55.5%
Green (1986)	11	36.4%

False Allegations of CSA...

The best study:

Trocme & Bala (2004) N=798 4%

In none of the 4% of cases was it the child who made the allegation that was determined to have been false.

The worst studies:

Benedek & Schetky (1984) N=18 55.5%

Green (1986) N=11 36.4%

Small sample of children referred to a private practice because of concerns the child was making a false allegation (These are NOT research studies)

Children's Sexual Behavior



Another Slight Change in Topic...

Children's Sexual Behavior

Research of William Friedrich and the Child Sexual Behavior Inventory (CSBI)

Another Slight Change in Topic...

Sample: Parent report of 467 children; age 3-6 years; screened/non-abused

Behavior	Boys	Girls
French Kissing	2%	4%
Tries to look at people undressing	35%	33%
Shows genitals to adults	23%	16%
Looks at nude pictures	12%	8%
Shy about undressing	30%	34%
Asks others to engage in sex acts	2%	0%
Imitates sexual behavior with dolls	1%	4%
Masturbates with hand	25%	17%
Masturbates with an object	1%	1%
Touches genitals when in public	39%	19%
Touches breasts	41%	46%
Touches other's genitals	8%	6%

Larsson, Svedin, & Friedrich (2000).

If we have enough time...

The role of Shame in CSA

The role of Trust in CSA

What happens in treatment?

Questions and Answers



I would be glad to send you a copy of this powerpoint; also copies of all of the articles mentioned today.
Finally, if you want CSA information – please email us!

Whoa... That's the end!

Thank you!

Anthony Urquiza, Ph.D. 916-734-7608

ajurquiza@ucdavis.edu
